

Point of Order—Mr. Berger

● (1500)

Mr. Brian Tobin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Hon. Member that this question is very much on the mind of the Minister, his Department, and his advisers. We are dealing with it even today. We would like to give him an answer as quickly as possible. Obviously I cannot do it in this House on short notice today. However, I want to say to the Hon. Member, in all sincerity, that it is much better to be wet behind the ears and trying sincerely, than to have dry sawdust for 15 years in a row between the ears, as one sits in the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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[Translation]

POINT OF ORDER

MR. BERGER—REMARKS OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. David Berger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention some comments made by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. I had hoped we would be here to listen to my comments. Unfortunately, he has already left the House. I am referring to some less than praiseworthy comments he made during oral question period. I find those comments rather surprising, especially since the Hon. Leader of the Opposition had said he hoped debate in the House would be more civilized.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to Citation 359(7) of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, which says, and I quote:

(7) A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

I can assure the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that I am quite capable of examining a Bill, of determining its substance and of making a considered decision. I merely want to ask him to withdraw his remarks.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair is disposed to say at this time—and the Chair was listening attentively to the remarks which were made—that with all due respect to the Hon. Member, while the remarks were not complimentary, they were not unparliamentary.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that you would hear a spokesman from this side before making a ruling. I didn't hear—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) realizes the Hon. Member raised the

point as to whether certain remarks were parliamentary or unparliamentary. The Chair has ruled that they are not unparliamentary, that they are acceptable within this House. Surely that disposes of the matter.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I would hope that in questions of this nature, when the remarks are attributed to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney), that we on this side might be heard before the Chair comes to a ruling. In the meantime, I of course agree wholeheartedly with the ruling of the Chair. It is sometimes very difficult for us on this side to distinguish the monkeys from the donkeys over there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I invite Hon. Members to reflect on whether they are contributing to the dignity of this place.

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PETITIONS

TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions presented by Hon. Members on Friday, November 18, 1983 meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

MR. FRETZ—RIGHT TO LIFE OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting a petition signed by thousands of people in the Province of Ontario. Whereas they believe that abortion clinics are the first step toward an even more relaxed abortion law and abortion on demand and are convinced that human problems must be solved by loving and caring, not by killing more than 65,000 unborn Canadians each year, wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation to guarantee the right to life of all Canadians as yet unborn, while at the same time promoting in every way possible those groups which seek to provide life-saving alternatives to abortion. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker: Motions. May I dispense with the reading of the motions?

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, we in this Party would prefer that you follow proper procedure at this time.
Motions stand.